

From: Roy Seneca/R3/USEPA/US
Sent: 10/2/2012 7:56:48 AM

To: Terri-A White/R3/USEPA/US@EPA; Angela McFadden/R3/USEPA/US@EPA; Gerald Heston/R3/USEPA/US@EPA; Fetzter.Richard@epamail.epa.gov; Richard Rupert/ESC/R3/USEPA/US; Richard Sumter/R3/USEPA/US@EPA; David Sternberg/R3/USEPA/US@EPA; Bonnie Smith/R3/USEPA/US; Donna Heron/R3/USEPA/US@EPA; William Smith/R3/USEPA/US@EPA; Garth Connor/R3/USEPA/US; Helen Duteau/R3/USEPA/US@EPA; David Polish/R3/USEPA/US@EPA; Trish Taylor/R3/USEPA/US; Bonnie Smith/R3/USEPA/US

CC:
Subject: Fox News (10-1) Hollywood, hypocrisy and Matt Damon's anti-fracking film

Hollywood, hypocrisy and Matt Damon's anti-fracking film

By Julia Seymour

Published October 01, 2012

| FoxNews.com

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It is true that there is nothing new under the sun, especially when it comes to Hollywood movies and TV shows. Ripoffs, remakes and reboots abound and the villains and heroes chosen by Tinseltown rarely shift.

Successful business people? Villains, of course. Environmentalists? Heroes, naturally. And few industries are maligned by entertainment media more than oil and gas, whistleblower characters, excepted. The left-wing Hollywood message is clear: oil and gas are bad, from children's movies like "The Muppets" which dished out its trademark farcical, silliness for viewers in late 2011, to the much more serious 2005 film "Syriana" which had George Clooney to sell its message that the oil industry is full of murderous villains.

Now, it's the business of natural gas. A process called fracking that has come under fire from the left, and naturally it has also become the target of Hollywood writers and celebrities, on and off the screen. The biggest example of that is Matt Damon's "Promised Land," which will be spewing that anti-fracking sentiment on screen when it is released in January 2013.

Hollywood hates fracking – so much, that the makers of that particular upcoming flick were willing to be accept financing from an oil-producing foreign government (the UAE) that stands to benefit by less domestic energy supply in the U.S. Imagine the outcry if a conservative film had gotten oil funding, especially from a foreign nation.

Those left-wing views aren't just peddled on the silver screen. Episodes of "Dallas," "CSI" and other shows have attacked fracking. One convoluted plot from TNT's "Rizzoli & Isles" featured a panoply of liberal stereotypes when an ex-Blackwater agent, masquerading as a yoga guru, killed a vegan student and a professor in order to hide his drilling for natural gas. One of the main characters also declared that fracking "pollutes groundwater," in that episode.

Such Hollywood tales ignore available information, such as University of Texas at Austin researchers who concluded "there is no evidence" of polluted drinking water from fracking.

The fact that Damon and John Krasinski decided to collaborate on an anti-fracking movie called “Promised Land” is as predictable as the end of a saccharine rom-com. But the true plot twist has come from reality, not fiction. As documentary filmmaker Phelim McAleer wrote in the Sept. 25, New York Post, “In courtroom after courtroom, it has been proved that anti-fracking activists have been guilty of fraud or misrepresentation.”

Things aren’t panning out the way the left wanted. In the small Pennsylvania town of Dimock, anti-fracking activists claimed the drilling had harmed the water supply. “[W]hile “Promised Land” was in production, the story of Dimock [Pa.] collapsed. The state investigated and its scientists found nothing wrong. So the 11 families insisted EPA scientists investigate. They did — and much to the dismay of the environmental movement found the water was not contaminated,” McAleer explained.

Not easily dissuaded from their fracking opposition, actor Mark Ruffalo and “Gasland” filmmaker Josh Fox scheduled an event in Dimock shortly thereafter to still protest fracking. Despite the EPA’s ruling that water in there was safe to drink and the Department of Environmental Protection’s decision to allow Cabot Oil & Gas Corp. to resume fracking in seven wells.

Fracking was invented in 1947, and if it’s used to extract natural gas from shale it stands to vastly increase the supply of natural gas and could generate \$332 billion toward GDP and create 2.4 million jobs by 2035, according to estimates from IHS Global Insight.

None of that matters to Hollywood, which prides itself on “ripped from the headlines” storylines, but they persist in ignoring facts that support fracking. They care little for stories of townspeople who wanted fracking to revive their troubled local economy. Businessweek wrote in June that natural gas drilling could have done a lot for “struggling farmers” in Wayne County, Pa., who said “the biggest thing that ever happened around here” was stopped by a regional regulatory agency.

And of course, Finding out that one of those scary, flaming tap water videos was a sham wasn’t the plot twist Damon and Krasinski were looking for, either.

All that news did have an impact on “Promised Land,” according to McAleer reports. He said the film went through a series of rewrites. What the actors came up with was a conspiracy worthy of Damon’s “Bourne” franchise. Now Krasinski’s character will play NOT just an environmentalist who reveals the “evil” oil company’s plot. Instead he will actually be a deep undercover agent for the oil industry to make fracktivists look like frauds.

Fox, is one such real-life fracktivist, who helped galvanize fracking opposition with his movie “Gasland.” Many have criticized the movie for having errors, but the most dramatic scene was when Fox lighted a glass of water on fire and attributed it to fracking. McAleer proved Fox knew of instances where tap water could be lit on fire decades ago. When McAleer confronted Fox with a 1976 report that there was a “troublesome amount of methane in the aquifer” Fox said, “Well, I don’t care about reports from 1976. There were reports from 1936 that people say they can light their water on fire in New York State.” He claimed it had “no bearing” on the issue. The viewing public might disagree.

You see Hollywood doesn’t face facts, it ignores them or twists them beyond recognition until they fit the left-wing agenda. And they’ve been doing it for years. Hollywood has hated on all kinds of businesses and businesspeople, from old man Potter in “It’s a Wonderful Life,” to Gordon Gekko on “Wall Street.” Instead of finding a new tale to tell, Damon and Krasinski are being typical lefty environmentalists. They’re recycling.

Julia A. Seymour is an assistant editor for the Media Research Center’s Business and Media Institute.

Read more: <http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2012/10/01/hollywood-hypocrisy-and-matt-damon-anti-fracking-film/print#ixzz288r57QIL>

Roy Seneca
EPA Region 3 Press Officer
Office of Public Affairs
seneca.roy@epa.gov
(215) 814-5567